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SERMON

Preached at

St. PAUL's, NEW-YORK,

September 22, 1776,

BEING

The first SUNDAY after the English Churches opened, on General HOWE's taking possession of the Town, and the Day subsequent to the attempt to destroy New-York by Fire.

By the Reverend Mr. O'BEIRNE,

Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Howe.

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And it ſhall come to paſs, after that I have plucked them out, I will return, and have compaſſion on them, and will bring them again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

WAS it then reſerved for a ſtranger to your perſons, and your altars, to addreſs you on this happy reſtoration of your public worſhip? this ſolemn re-eſtabliſhment of your religious aſſemblies? Was it to have been the good fortune of one, to whom you were unknown, but by your ſufferings, to be among the firſt of the Miniſters of God, to bring the comfort and conſolation of his word to an afflicted and perſecuted people? to tell them, that he has not forgotten his "loving kindneſſes of old;" that however he ſeemed reſolved to "chaſten them in his diſpleaſure; to caſt off his altar and abhor his ſanctuary; to cauſe the ſolmn feaſts and ſabbaths to be forgotten," and, "in the indignation of his wrath, to eject the King and the Prieſt;" that however he ſuffers "their city to be left deſolate and broken down, and every houſe ſhut up, ſo that no man may come in;" yet that he will "return again, in his mercy, in his appointed time, to have compaſſion upon his afflicted, to comfort his oppreſſed, "and to "bring them again

every man to his heritage, and every man to his land; to ſay to the priſoners, Go forth, and to them that are in darkneſs, Shew yourſelves; to reſtore their Princes as at the firſt, and their Counſellors as at the beginning, and again to give them prieſts according to his heart?" Let it be my firſt care to bleſs his holy name, for having permitted me to join with your returning clergy in the diſcharge of this pleaſing office. They alſo will add their praiſes to mine. You, my brethren, will not be wanting in gratitude and thankfulneſs to the God of your redemption, and the united voice of prieſts and people will be—" it is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait, for the ſalvation of the Lord." His ways are inſcrutable, but his goodneſs certain, and without bounds.

Who that was witneſs of the cruel and diſaſtrous deed of the night before laſt, could promiſe himſelf, that you ſhould be aſſembled this day in the houſe of God, to praiſe him for your wonderful deliverance? Who could have hoped that this temple would remain a monument of the returning favour of Heaven, amidſt the horror of the ruins through which you muſt have paſſed to approach it? Which of you could have ſaid to himſelf. that he ſhould ſee theſe doors open once more for the reception of the faithful, " though as yet but as the ſhaking of an olive tree, and the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done?" Or hear theſe walls ſo long ſilent and unfrequented, filled again with the praiſes of Him, to whoſe name you had raiſed them? Is not this the Lord's doing? Is not this our God for " whom we have waited? We have waited for him, he hath ſaved us, and we will be glad and rejoice in his ſalvation,".

Suffer me, however, to check for a moment the ferment which theſe different ſenſations of joy and grief, ſo rapidly ſucceeding each other within theſe few days paſt, muſt naturally have raiſed in your breaſts. When the heart, long oppreſſed, and cloſed in affliction, is ſuddenly opened to the impreſſions of joy, only to be

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overwelmed as ſuddenly with an additional weight of ſorrow and diſmay, the tumult within muſt be too violent to leave much room for calm and uſeful reflections, It ſhall therefore be my buſineſs to endeavour to ſuggeſt ſuch thoughts as appear ſuitable to this extraordinary occaſion, and to regulate your preſent affections, in a manner that beſt becomes the diſciples of Chriſt. This has never been, and I am confident never will be, the pulpit of contention or ſtrife. No "prophets, propheſying lyes in the name of the Lord who ſent them not," ſhall ever turn it into a ſtage for ſedition. The words of truth and life will never be preverted here in promoting violence and bloodſhed, under pretence of conſulting the intereſts of the God of Peace; to cauſe the religion of the lowly, mild and meek Jeſus, to ſpeak the language of ambition, ſlaughter, and revenge; or to conſecrate and deliver out in his name the ſword that is to be plunged by his followers into each others breaſts. Thanks be to the Lord "we have not ſo learned Chriſt." We will neither abuſe his mercy and long forbearance ourſelves, by thus daring to proſtitute his awful name; nor ſhall we preſume to deal out the bolts of his vengeance againſt others, whom his juſtice may arraign as guilty of ſuch a profanation. I therefore repeat it again, our only buſineſs will be to ſuggeſt ſuch reflections as ſhould engage the minds of Chriſtians on this occaſion; to exhort you to turn your thoughts to yourſelves; to conſider the redemption that has been wrought in your favour, and the diſpoſition with which you ſhould receive theſe inſtances of the divine mercies.

The firſt conſideration that ariſes from the ſubject is the grateful ſenſe you ſhould entertain of the goodneſs of God.

The immediate impreſſions of gratitude for preſent benefits are ſtrong, lively, and affecting. We feel them with warmth; we expreſs them with rapture. But it happens too frequently that we enjoy them with indifference, and by degrees totally forget the gracious hand that conferred them. While we are in danger,

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and fear is upon us, we " call upon the name of the Lord;" Our ſins and tranſgreſſions affect us in their conſequences; and our future obedience, fidelity, and gratitude, are fervently pledged in the hopes of immediate protection and relief. But when the firſt ſenſe of our delivery is paſt, when our enemies are ſuppreſſed. and the danger removed, we are too apt to forget the reſolutions we formed in the hour of diſtreſs; our former paſſions and evil habits too frequently return with our former ſecurity. The God of our ſalvation is forgotten and repaid with ingratitude, neglect, and diſobedience.

The conduct of individuals is, generally ſpeaking, the conduct of the community. Ingratitude for favours, though a diſgrace to our nature, is but too common in the private intercourſes of life; nor are the inſtances leſs frequent, of the ungrateful returns which nations have made for public benefits conferred upon them. The odious vice in either caſe receives its aggravation in proportion to the mercies we have experienced, the favours we have been bleſſed with, and the character of our benefactor: But ſhould it extend to that beneficent Power in whom we move, and have our being, and rob him of the return he challenges from his creatures for his boundleſs mercy and love, it then aſſumes its moſt deformed ſhape: it then receives its utmoſt weight and accumulation of guilt.

All that is ſacred or dear upon earth—your religion, your civil rights and liberties, the enjoyment of your property, the freedom of your perſons, the worſhip of your God, the comfort of the ſacraments, the preſence and exhortation of your Miniſters—all that you poſſeſſed, and gloried in as Britiſh ſubjects and as Chriſtians, wreſted from you by violence and oppreſſions while " the ſhepherds were ſmitten and the ſheep of the flock ſcattered abroad,"—all theſe bleſſings, valuable ſurely, if there be any ſo on this ſide the grave, and the dearer to you now for having been ſo cruelly deprived of them, hath your God begun to reſtore to you

in this your day; and with his ſtretched-out arm, in a manner viſible to every eye, brought you back to a proſpect of happier days, and placed you again under the protecting care of the ancient guardians of your religion and liberty. And can it be poſſible that you ſhould ever ſuffer the remembrance of the divine mercies, thus extended to you, to be blotted out from your minds? It were doing wrong to thoſe who have ſuffered with the fortitude and perſeverance, the loyalty and attachment to their Sovereign, which have diſtinguiſhed the friends of Government in this colony, even to ſuppoſe it. And I ſhould hope, that they who have endured ſo long and painful a trial, rather than renounce their loyalty, or the religious principles on which that loyalty is chiefly founded, will never hereafter be guilty of any action, or purſue any conduct, that can diſgrace them as good ſubjects, or as virtuous Chriſtians.

But while I thus exhort you to perſevere in your grateful acknowledgements to the God of your redemption, let me not neglect a point of equal importance to you, equally acceptable to him. The uſe, which in his gracious providence he deſigns we ſhould make of the miſconduct of others, or of the puniſhments which our ſins may have brought on ourſelves; is frequently pointed out in the ſcriptures. His viſitations he ſets up as marks to caution us againſt the rocks and ſhelves on which folly and vice have already cauſed ſo many to be wrecked! and willfully to run upon them is to ſlight the divine mercy—is an aggravation of all our former guilt, and juſtly expoſe us to ſtill more ſevere effects of the wrath of heaven. The Pſalmiſt, enumerating the various calamities inflicted on the Iſraelites for their incredulity and diſobedience, mentions, as a ſource of additional miſeries to this ſtiff-necked people, that they neglected to profit by their own fatal experience, or the dreadful examples they daily ſaw before their eyes, of the Lords indignation. They refuſed to humble themſelves beneath the divine chaſtiſement, but continued to provoke their deliverer by freſh proofs of ingratitude.

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" The wrath of God came upon them, and ſmote down the choſen men of Iſrael; for all this they ſinned ſtill—therefore their days did he conſume in vanity, and their years in troubles." Entering into theſe views, my brethren, conſider with me the ſteps that have led your country into its preſent calamities—you will be the better enabled to check them in future, at leaſt to decline and avoid them yourſelves. The exceſſes of others will teach you a leſſon of prudence and moderation to regulate your own conduct.

" My ſon fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change"—was the excellent rule laid down by the wiſeſt of men. Againſt thoſe who tranſgreſs it, he denounces a ſudden and inevitable deſtruction. Whatever they may promiſe themſelves, however they may ſeem to proſper for a time, ruin, infallible ruin, awaits them when leaſt they expect it; nor is it poſſible to foreſee the miſeries they may entail on themſelves and their deſcendants—" their calamity ſhall riſe ſuddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?" The words are remarkable, but they are dictated by wiſdom and ſupported by experience. It has happened from your former proſperous ſtate, and the preſent calamities of this province, from which you happily begin to reſpire, that no nation upon earth can form a better judgment upon this important queſtion than yourſelves; and I have before me, in this aſſembly, a living example to which alone I need refer.

Call then to mind the happy and proſperous days this colony enjoyed, when loyalty to your Sovereign, affection for the conſtitution of your parent ſtate, and obedience to the laws you enjoyed under its protection, diſtinguiſhed it above all the other provinces of America. Your condition was then an object of envy to nations corrupted by the refinements of luxury. Peace was in your dwellings, plenty in your ſtreets—induſtry diffuſed her bleſſings through your fields with an increaſing profuſion, giving life to all the uſeful arts, and nurturing

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them daily into maturity and perfection. The produce of your country flowed from your port in a conſtant, uninterrupted ſtream, and you received in return the conveniences and comforts of life, and all the elegancies which a free and extenſive commerce can beſtow on a prudent and contented people. A friendly, hoſpitable, and ſocial intercourſe united you together as the members of one family, to the admiration and delight of ſtrangers who reſided among you; you were bleſſed beyond the uſual lot of men; happy, compleatly ſo, did you but know how to value your happineſs, and to preſerve it!

How different the ſcene to which I muſt call off your attention! what a change of proſpect will the reverſe exhibit! where ſhall we ſeek for that treaſure of happineſs which you could boaſt, when every man ſat under his own vine, and eat his bread with chearfulneſs? Alas! is it not waſted all, and conſumed in viſionary ſchemes, empty and fanciful as the dreams of the morning? Is it not ſquandered away in lawleſs and ungrateful attempts, repugnant to every principle divine and human? in purſuits which plain ſenſe and reaſon condemn, and at which even the impulſes of nature muſt recoil? Peace, frightened from the ſeats where once ſhe loved to dwell, long ſince took her flight from among you. Diſſentions, party rage, public enmities, and private animoſities, uſurped her place, and brought with them a horrid train of mutual fears, diſtruſts, and endleſs jealouſies. By theſe were the confidence and harmony of all ſocial intercourſe deſtroyed; by theſe were the bands of love and friendſhip torn aſunder; by theſe were even the ties of conſanguinity and nature diſſolved. Self-intereſt, ſelf-preſervation, the welfare of poſterity, principles ingrafted in the human mind by the beneficent creator, were all confounded and loſt in this dark and diſmal night of confuſion, anarchy, and licentiouſneſs. See induſtry perverted from its uſual purpoſes, and employed in improving the arts of deſtruction. Your plough-ſhares it turned into ſwords,

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and your pruning hooks into ſpears, the reverſe of the bleſſing pronounced by Iſaiah. See your fields, once cultivated, the gardens of America, laid waſte, and turned into licentious encampments, and the deſolating ſcenes of war; ſee your commerce, your envied commerce, deſtroyed, your property ſeized and diſſipated in ſupport of the cauſe you abhorred—your liberties diſpiſed and trodden under foot, and an armed multitude inſulting over your miſeries, turned looſe upon your poſſeſſions, and rioting in your ſubſtance. In vain you looked up to juſtice for ſupport; her ſeats were overthrown, and trampled in the duſt; her rulers diſperſed, and the people abandoned to every wild impulſe of humour and paſſion, without laws, without magiſtrates, without form of Government. In ſhort, too well might we apply to you the words of Jeremiah: "If you went forth into the fields, behold the ſlain with the ſword; if you entered into the city, behold ſhe that was full of inhabitants, and princeſs among the provinces, ſitting ſolitary, and become as a diſconſolate, childleſs widow. Both the prophet and the prieſt went about in a land they knew not! your friends dealt treacherouſly with you, and became your enemies, while you were gone into captivity, becauſe of affliction, and becauſe of great ſervitude.

To what cauſes are we to attribute this deplorable change? Whence is it that you can ſay to yourſelves, ſuch was the happineſs we once could boaſt; ſuch the melancholy reverſe we have experienced! I have heard ſome attribute it to the imperfection of human nature, incapable of enjoying a durable ſtate of proſperity, and often-times moſt diſcontented, when bleſſed with the greateſt cauſe of content. But I ſhall ſearch for it among the ſources of the decay and fall of nations, which the ſcriptures of God point out to me. Warranted by theſe, I ſhall not heſitate to aſſert, that if this province had continued "to fear the Lord, and the King, and had not meddled with thoſe who are given to change," the tempeſt would have ſpent its rage at a

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diſtance from you, and peace, induſtry, and happineſs, would ſtill have bleſſed your dwellings, as they did of old. You, indeed, my friends, ſeem to have been well convinced of the truth. The ſtruggle you maintained was vigorous, and for ſome time ſucceſsful—but all were not animated with your ſpirit. The love of novelty, or whatever other cauſes the powers of darkneſs beſt can tell—for it is impoſſible to account for ſuch folly and madneſs on any known principles—ſeduced too many from their allegiance to their Sovereign, and their former happy attachment to the Britiſh conſtitution; and theſe antient barriers being once removed, all the diſorders that have well nigh overthrown your country, broke in upon you, and the depreſſion of your religion for the time, followed of courſe. So true it is, that when reſtleſſneſs and diſcontent once poſſeſs the mind, it is impoſſible to foreſee to what extremes a rage for innovation, and a paſſion for change, will tranſport their votaries. They are like the "unclean ſpirit" mentioned in the Goſpel, always on the wing, *ſeeking* a place of reſt, but "never finding it." Exceſſes, at which men would have ſhuddered at their firſt ſetting out, "ſwept clean," and placed in a deluſive point of view by faction and party, loſe their deformity, and daily make way for other exceſſes ſtill more criminal, ſtill more enormous. Theſe diſſatisfied "ſpirits take to themſelves other ſpirits more wicked than themſelves, and the laſt ſtate of theſe men become worſe than the firſt." I need not make the application—It is but too manifeſt you have already done it for me.

I have ſaid that when too many of this province ſuffered themſelves to be ſeduced from their allegiance to their Sovereign, and their former happy attachment to the Britiſh conſtitution, the depreſſion of your religion followed of courſe. Let me not be miſunderſtood—I mean not to engage in an invidious point of controverſy, which has often been carried to ſuch fatal lengths. Religious diſputes obtrude themſelves too frequently into ſubjects of mere political concern, and

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ſerve no other end than to widen diviſions, and encreaſe animoſities, which the holy ſyſtem, the intereſts of which they would ſeem to ſupport, would wiſh to allay for ever. Warmed with zeal for their particular tenets, however uneſſentially differing from each other, the paſſions of the diſputants work themſelves into the controverſy, and we are apt to aſcribe their raſh and intemperate dictates to that ſyſtem, the defence of which they have embraced. There is alſo another prejudice which is apt to lead us aſtray in this important matter. As in the different forms of government, at preſent eſtabliſhed throughout the Chriſtian world, religion is fundamentally connected with their civil and political inſtitutes; we generally conſider them as going hand in hand, and charge the creed of each particular ſect with the political errors and diſorders of its profeſſors. A church there is, indeed, whoſe principles have been proved by fatal experience to be ſo eſſentially inconſiſtent with every notion of free and rational government, ſo infallibly introductive of a double ſlavery, forging chains both for the body and mind, that it has been deſervedly branded with this ſoul imputation, and juſtly abhored by nations jealous of their liberties. But that among Proteſtant churches, ſuch a charge ſhould be urged and retorted by each other, with ſo much virulence and animoſity, hath long been a cauſe of grief to every well-wiſher of the reformed religion, and a great ſubject of triumph to their common enemies, both at home and abroad. Let me not attempt to enlarge the breach, or be guilty of an error, which I condemn in others. I ſhall only obſerve, that in every age, in every ſtate, there are men of depraved hearts, who put on religion as a cloak to cover their ſiniſter views; or uſe it as a political tool to work upon the minds of the weak and uninſtructed, and all whoſe zeal without knowledge renders them an eaſy prey to the art of ſeducers. Theſe, like the lame and impotent at the pool of Bethesda, watch the troubling of the waters, that they may be the firſt to take advantage

vantage of the public commotions, and on the ruins of the peace and happineſs of their country, pave the way to their own advancement; Men, who declaim againſt every power but that which they have themſelves uſurped; to whom the pretence of the public good, and the intereſt of their country, is as eaſy as that of religion; and who aſſume both in common with every reſtleſs malecontent, who in every age, under every government, has deſtroyed the peace of the Chriſtian world.

From what cauſe your ſufferings may have originated, this is not the time nor the place to conſider. Too certain it is, that they have now riſen to ſuch a height of aggravation, as needs no words to repreſent to you—you feel it beyond the energy of words. The ſmart of recent wrongs, and former injuries, ſpeaks a language which thoſe who ſympathize with you in your ſufferings, can never adopt. Whatever the principles of your perſecutors may be, their unrelenting malice is but too notorious; and they have added to all their former exceſſes, a deed of atrociouſneſs which muſt open the eyes of the moſt infatuated—muſt totally alienate even the ſmall numbers, who may have hitherto been deluded into ſome favourable opinion of their cauſe. To what a ſcene were you witneſſes the night before laſt! when juſt eſcaped from the ſtorm, and imagining yourſelves arrived at a port of reſt; labouring to collect together the ſmall remains of your fortune that had eſcaped the general wreck; meeting once more and embracing, after ſo long and painful a ſeparation, the objects of your tendereſt affection, or ſolacing yourſelves with the hopes of being ſpeedily re-united to thoſe who were yet detained in bondage from you; congratulating your friends on your mutual deliverance, and the proſpect that was opening to you of returning peace, quiet, and ſecurity.—In this dawn of your hopes and expectations, to awake at the midnight hour, and find your city in flames; to ſee your all periſhing before your eyes, and to know that your deſtroyers were ſecretly among you, ſpreading the ruin, and exulting in the ſucceſs of their infernal ſcheme!

This was not the ſudden act of a vanquiſhed and flying enemy, perpetrated in the peeviſh moment of diſappointment and defeat, or contrived to favour their eſcape. No,—ſeveral days had elapſed ſince their flight, and quiet ſeemed to have re-viſited you under the banner of your deliverers. Even the

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base incendiaries returned among you, wearing the mask of peace. We hoped that they had repented of their excesses—had been convinced of their folly and madness, and meant to embrace the proffered clemency of their Sovereign, who was willing to forget the ungrateful revolt against his authority, their contempt of his crown and government, and the insults offered to his person. But they cried "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." The blow they were meditating was the more dangerous, from its being thus concealed—they gloried in striking it home, and nothing, under Heaven, but the activity of your English friends, could have prevented the whole city's falling a victim to their determined malice. Yes, my friends, ye were witnesses of it.—Ye saw the treacherous adherents of these pretended guardians of your rights and possessions, who came to rescue you from tyranny and oppression, armed with fire-brands, and under cover of the darkness, wraping your city in flames. Ye saw the brave and generous servant of your King,—that King, whom you have so often heard represented as a tyrant, who sends forth his fleets and armies to enslave, ravage, destroy—flying to the assistance of their fellow-subjects, in the midst of the flames, at the hazard of their lives, exerting every nerve to preserve your dwellings and possessions, and tearing from the hands of the dark incendiaries, the instruments they had prepared for your destruction. Had it pleased Heaven, that the success could have answered their zeal, so many families, once blessed with comfort and affluence, would not have been turned out on the world naked, helpless, and stripped of their all,—the seminary of indigent merit, where poverty found a resource against ignorance, and where charity reclaimed thousands from idleness and dissipation to virtue and industry, would yet have stood,*—the mansion of your worthy and reverend Minister, whose absence you still regret, and the possessions appropriated for the support of your clergy, would not have perished, and added to the distresses they have already suffered on your account and their own.—But "ye smitten and afflicted," who

* *In the fire of Saturday, Sept.* 21, *a thousand houses, nearly one-fourth of the city, were laid in ashes. Trinity church, the public charity school, the Rector's house, and a Lutheran chapel, were among the buildings that were consumed.——The loss sustained in houses, &c. by the Corporation of Trinity church, amounts at a moderate computation, to thirty thousand pounds New-York currency.*

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behold your "destruction coming" on you "like a whirlwind," your own industry, and the labour of your ancestors, swept off in the space of a moment, whither could you have fled from the rage of your enemies? Not even the Temples of the Lord were sacred from their fury—his altars could afford you no sanctuary. The mother of your churches, the ornament of your worship, the first edifice which the piety of your ancestors had raised to the God of their fathers, in gratitude for his mercies in a strange land, was marked out for certain destruction. Some child of perdition claimed to himself the merit of this daring sacrilege, and involved the ancient and venerable pile in the same ruin with which they designed to extirpate all the monuments of your religion, every vestige of your ancient splendor and glory.

In this scene of universal danger and distress, to what can the ministers of God exhort you? Ill should we know "what manner of spirit we were of" if we suffered any expressions that may have fallen from us to be interpreted into a breach of charity, the crown of Christian virtue; or into a design of sharpening the virulence of party, or increasing animosities that have already too fatally destroyed the peace of your Jerusalem. To minister some consolation in your sufferings, as becometh the teachers of the Gospel, who must be unworthy indeed of the character they bear not to feel for the afflictions of their brethren, who look to them for comfort and instruction; to set before you "the loving kindnesses of the Lord," and the redemption he hath wrought in your favour, and to exhort you to make every becoming return for his mercies and love; to point out to you, and warn you against the abuses that have brought ruin upon your country—this has been our only aim. If we have succeeded, all our wishes are satisfied, and we shall have the consolation to think that you will sanctify this day, as becometh Christians, by prayer and thanksgiving; by repentance for past sins, and resolutions of an amendment of life; by practising the duties of that religion, for the interests of which you have manifested such zeal and attachment; by laying aside all malice, hatred, and desire of revenge; by committing your cause to the justice of God, and waiting with resignation for the further accomplishment of his gracious designs. He who can "still the raging of the sea" knows best how to restore peace and tranquility to your distracted country. May he correct the hearts, and enlighten

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the underſtandings of your infatuated brethren, who ſtill refuſe to contribute their endeavours towards healing theſe unhappy diſputes. And while their example proves a warning to you,—while, in their conduct, you conſider the exceſſes to which thoſe may be tranſported, who once paſs the ancient bounds of lawful and ſettled government, may God give you grace to attach yourſelves the more firmly to our happy conſtitution both in church and ſtate.

Humbly, and with all due proſtration of heart, I ſhall venture to affirm that your cauſe is his own. It is the cauſe of peace, loyalty, and ſound reaſon, expoſed to the attempts of miſguided men, whom he ſeems to have given over to a blindneſs of heart that hurries them into all the violence and artifice of ſedition, frenzy, and rebellion. Fear not then, my friends, but in his own time "his wiſdom will order all things ſweetly." In the mean time, learn to reſign yourſelves to whatever means he may be pleaſed to employ for that end, and humble yourſelves beneath his chaſtiſing, but fatherly hand. Would to God I could ſay that the danger were paſt! But treachery, perhaps, ſtill lurketh amongſt you. Let every man, therefore, be careful and vigilant. Nature requires, and religion approves, that we ſhould make uſe of the means Providence hath put into our power for our protection and ſafety. But let this be your chief dependance, that he "who is with you, is greater than they who are againſt you." He, from whom alone your ſafety can come, "neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps." Though your enemies may hope "that the darkneſs ſhall cover them, the darkneſs is no darkneſs with him." He will not let them "have their deſire," nor their "miſchievous imagination proſper." Let the ſenſe of the common danger to which you are expoſed, and the fellowſhip of your paſt ſufferings, ſtrengthen the ties of charity between you, and bind you together as friends and brethren. Let a reciprocation of kindneſs and humanity diſtinguiſh you in this ſeaſon of diſtreſs; to ſoften the rigour of each others ſufferings, and lighten the univerſal burthen of affliction. Be of one heart, and one mind, cleave together,——commend yourſelves to the protection of God, and doubt not but he will complete the work he hath already ſo graciouſly begun. And when he "ſhall have plucked out" all ſtrife and enmity from among you, fear not but he will "return, and have compaſſion upon you,

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and bring you again every man to his heritage, and every man to his land."

I must not finish as if I meant to disappoint your expectations, and not adopt a conclusion which I am convinced you have already anticipated. The allegiance they had sworn to their lawful Sovereign, and affectionate attachment to his virtuous character, compelled your clergy to shut these doors, rather than omit the dutiful addresses, which the church enjoins them daily to offer to Heaven for his safety. Let us therefore conclude the service of this day, when the freedom of your worship is restored to you, by uniting together with one heart, and one voice, to implore the divine favour and protection for our Sovereign Lord, King GEORGE; that God would be pleased to give him length of days, and encrease of happiness—to prosper all his undertakings for the good of his people, and to bless him with what his actions prove, and his words affect to be, the † favourite wish of his heart; the restoration of harmony, and the re-establishment of order and happiness in every part of his dominions.

† *See his Majesty's Speech at the conclusion of the session of Parliament.*

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